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Cambodia: The government's chances appear slight for obtaining any significant Vietnamese Communist troop withdrawals.

According to press reports from Phnom Penh, initial talks with North Vietnamese and Viet Cong representatives went badly. The Communists refused to respond to Phnom Penh's demands on the troop withdrawal issue. The Communists may be trying to stall until Sihanouk returns to Cambodia next week, but if they appear too inflexible the Cambodian Government may break off the talks. The government is keeping up the pressure by encouraging large anti - Vietnamese Communist demonstrations in Phnom Penh.

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[redacted] observers in Phnom Penh do not believe that the Cambodians will launch any major military action against the Communists, but the possibility of a major incident is strong as long as the Cambodians continue to press hard for the withdrawal of Communist units. Any such development might force the government's hand and make a political resolution of the situation much more difficult.

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Thailand: Communist insurgent activity continues to be centered in the northern provinces.

The mountain-based insurgents are using the dry season to strengthen base areas along the Lao border. They are now running the affairs of entire villages, including opium production and tribal schooling. They continue to harass isolated government outposts along the Lao border. There has been little expansion of the movement into new areas, although the Communists have made considerable strides in Tak Province, on the Burmese border, where discontented tribesmen have repeatedly attacked government security and development teams.

The Communists have temporarily eased efforts to expand their influence among the nontribal lowland population in the north. They may have had their attention diverted by events in neighboring Laos, which for the first time appear to threaten their support organization. The recent fighting in Sayaboury Province in Laos has reportedly disrupted the Thai Communists' infiltration routes. During their southward retreat from Xieng Lom last month, Lao Government forces ran into the Thai Communists' northern headquarters, forcing the latter's relocation.

A North Vietnamese defector has recently provided new information on Hanoi's effort in Sayaboury Province. The defector claims that at least four North Vietnamese armed propaganda groups have been operating there since 1967. Although the principal purpose of these teams is to help build the Pathet Lao organization, at least one of them has also supported Thai insurgents on the Thai side of the border.

In the northeast, the Communist guerrillas have failed to increase armed activity, terrorism, and

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[redacted] in January the insurgent leaders decided to continue the year-long effort to improve the jungle organization and village support apparatus, limiting their attacks to areas of traditional insurgent strength. The government has responded with unusual aggressiveness in dealing with the guerrillas in this area.

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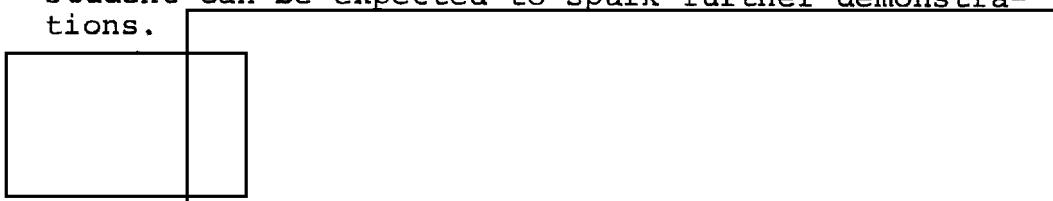
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Philippines: The violence that erupted on 17 March reflects the growing influence of radicals in the student protest movement.

Demonstrations that began peacefully in downtown Manila ended with the stoning of buses to protest higher fares and the killing of a student by a private security guard. At least two other persons were wounded during the day.

Some 3,000 students started by protesting the policies of the Marcos administration and US influence in the Philippines. After a mock trial that found Marcos guilty of corruption in last November's presidential elections, the students left without police interference. Some marched on the US Embassy, but were scattered before doing any damage, and another group that headed for the Presidential Palace was turned back by the Philippine armed forces.

The size of the demonstration fell far short of the expectations of its organizers. Radical and moderate student leaders are increasingly at odds over the need for violent tactics; moderates apparently stayed away in anticipation of trouble. The split in the student movement will help Marcos to discredit it, but he clearly faces persistent student challenges that may force him to make more concessions. More immediately, the killing of the student can be expected to spark further demonstrations.



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India: Violence, touched off by a general strike called by the radical Communist Party/Marxist, has attended the collapse of the state government in West Bengal.

Chief Minister Mukherjee, a non-Communist who has headed the coalition government since its formation in February 1969, resigned on 16 March. He has agreed, however, to stay on as caretaker while the governor consults with political leaders about forming another government.

The Marxists dominated the last coalition, but have so antagonized their former partners that most observers believe that they will be unable to forge a stable coalition and that "president's rule"--government from New Delhi--will be imposed. Prime Minister Gandhi will probably work for an interim arrangement that will bring the violence under control, reduce political tension, and improve the climate for eventually forming a viable alternative coalition.

Army and central reserve police units have been moved into the area and are prepared to act quickly should fresh outbreaks of violence among competing political groups get out of hand. In addition to the capital, Calcutta, outlying areas were also tense, and communications difficulties may be obscuring the extent of disorders in the northern part of the state.

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Finland: A pronounced swing to the right in the recent parliamentary elections may lead to governmental instability and complicate Helsinki's relations with Moscow.

The conservative National Coalition Party and the radical right Rural Party were the only ones to increase their share of the vote over 1966. They increased their parliamentary representation by 11 and 17 seats respectively. The 10.5 percent of the vote obtained by the Rural Party, the highest ever by a far-right group in Finland, represents a surprisingly strong upsurge of protest sentiment among rural elements against the establishment in general and the modernized outlook of the Center, formerly Agrarian, Party in particular.

All parties participating in the center-left government lost ground, with the heaviest losses suffered by the Center Party and the Communist-dominated Peoples Democratic League. The losses among Prime Minister Koivisto's Social Democrats were more moderate, and they remain the largest single element in parliament.

The combined strength of the government parties, while down to 136 seats from 165 in the last parliament, is still sufficient to control the government, but the magnitude of the shift to the right creates uncertainty about its future composition. Spokesmen say that the present lineup needs only minor changes, but the conservative opposition takes the view that this would constitute a government of losers and would be contrary to the will of the electorate.

Although the election outcome would seem to point to a right-center or right-socialist coalition, the attitude of Moscow, which has taken upon itself the task of passing on the acceptability of Finnish political combinations, may well prove decisive. The Soviets will be unhappy over the election outcome and will probably insist on continuation of the present center-left coalition.

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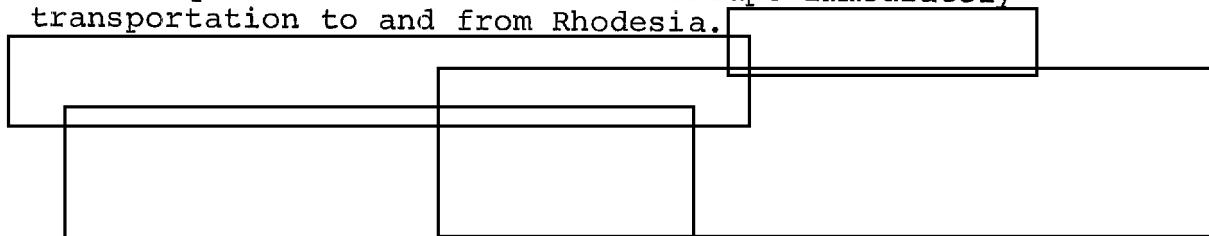
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UN-Rhodesia: The UN Security Council will likely vote today on a ban on transportation links with Rhodesia.

Yesterday the British draft resolution did not secure enough votes for adoption. The UK proposal would merely have condemned Rhodesia's declaration of republican status and called on all countries to refrain from recognizing or aiding the Smith regime. A resolution offered by the African bloc failed to pass because of negative votes cast by the UK and the US, the first time the US has opposed a resolution supported by at least nine members of the Council. The African draft went much further than the UK proposal, calling on all states to "sever immediately" all means of communications with Rhodesia and condemning the UK for failing to use force to bring down the Smith regime.

Following the defeat of these two resolutions, Finland presented a compromise proposal and invoked the 24-hour rule to obtain a vote today. Helsinki's draft requires all members to interrupt immediately transportation to and from Rhodesia.

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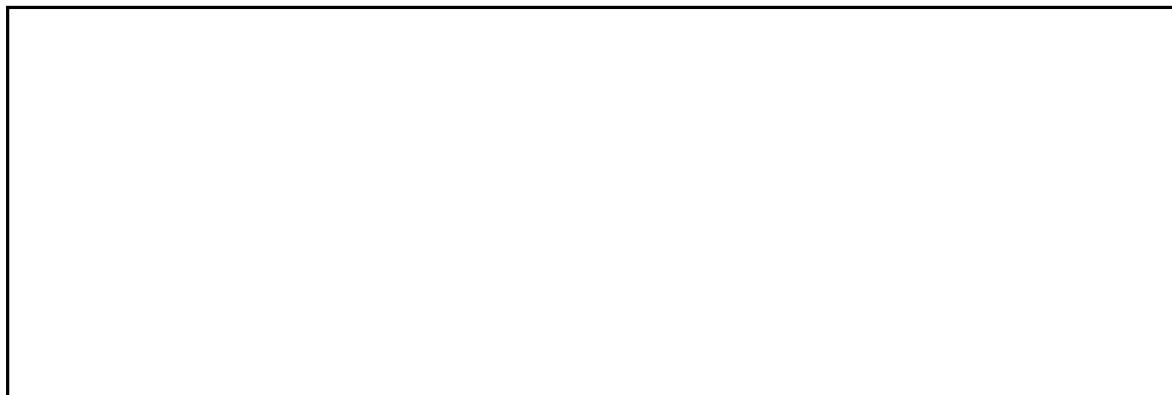
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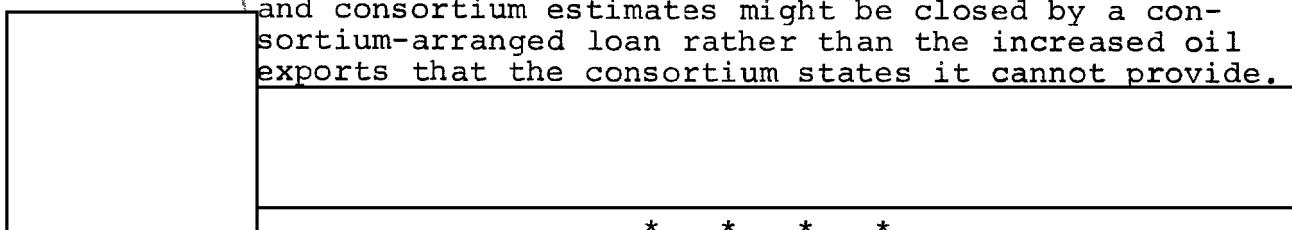
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Iran: The latest round of negotiations on oil revenues, which ended last weekend, indicated some flexibility on both sides. Iranian officials insisted that their demands for revenues for the Iranian year that begins later this month must be met. They suggested, however, that the gap between their demands and consortium estimates might be closed by a consortium-arranged loan rather than the increased oil exports that the consortium states it cannot provide.

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Burundi: The government has signed orders for the purchase of a dozen armored cars from France. President Micombero probably has purchased the cars in part to placate Tutsi army officers, some of whom regard neighboring Hutu-dominated Rwanda as a threat. In addition, Micombero also wants to reassure the ruling Tutsi elite that the government is capable of dealing with the country's restive Hutu tribal majority that has long been resentful of Tutsi domination.

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